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RURAL EDUCATION IN TRANSITION, A STUDY OF TRENDS AND PATTERNS IN LOUISIANA.

BY- SMITH, MARION B. BERTRAND, ALVIN L.
LOUISIANA ST. UNIV. AND A AND M COLL. SYSTEM

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POPULATION TRENDS, DEFINED AS DISTRIBUTION, COMPOSITION, AND CHANGES IN NUMBERS WERE DETERMINED IN THIS DOCUMENT FOR THE STATE OF LOUISIANA. DATA WERE GATHERED FROM PUBLICATIONS OF THE BUREAU OF THE CENSUS, THE LOUISIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, AND QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES OF HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS IN SELECTED SAMPLE SCHOOLS. THE EFFECT OF RURAL POPULATION TRENDS ON RURAL EDUCATION WAS EMPHASIZED. CURRICULUMS OF RURAL SCHOOLS AND QUALIFICATIONS OF RURAL SCHOOL TEACHERS WERE DISCUSSED. ALSO INCLUDED WAS A 1959 CASE STUDY OF RURAL SCHOOLS IN A FRENCH CULTURE PARISH AND A NONFRENCH CULTURE PARISH. THE DOCUMENT CONCLUDED THAT (1) DEFICITS IN THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL TEACHERS AND CLASSROOMS WOULD NOT BE A SERIOUS PROBLEM OF LOUISIANA RURAL SCHOOLS IN THE NEAR FUTURE, (2) SCHOOL ATTENDANCE WAS NO LONGER A PROBLEM, (3) RURAL SCHOOLS WERE NOT SERVING A POPULATION THAT WAS PLANNING FOR CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE, AND (4) FAMILIARITY WITH RAPID CHANGING POPULATION AND SOCIOCULTURAL PATTERNS WAS NECESSARY FOR PERSONS CONCERNED WITH RURAL EDUCATION PLANNING. (FS)

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Rural Education in Transition

A STUDY OF TRENDS AND PATTERNS IN LOUISIANA

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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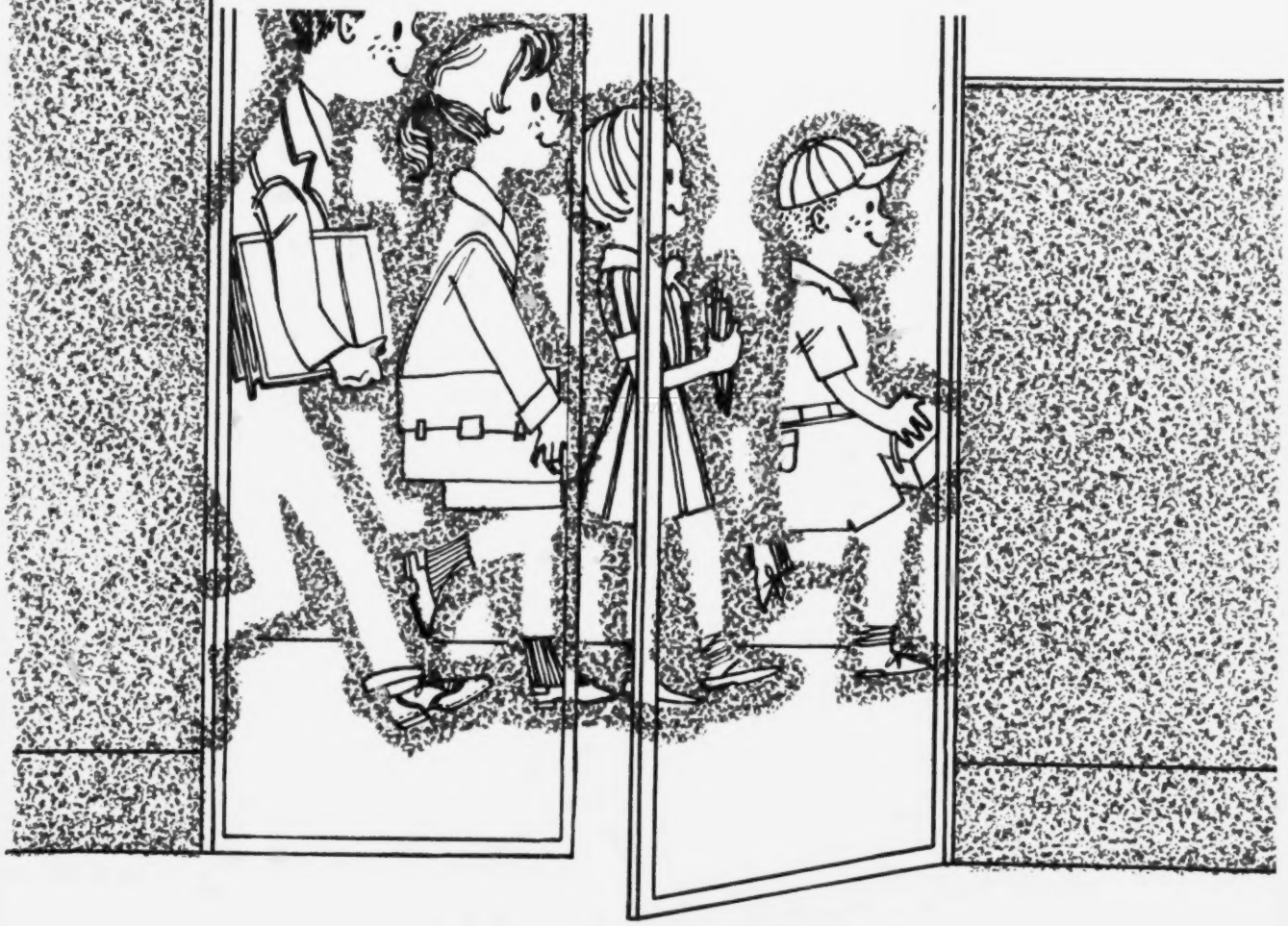
by
Marion B. Smith
and
Alvin L. Bertrand



Department of Rural Sociology
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
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Charles W. Upp, Director

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Summary and Conclusions

This investigation was undertaken to determine trends and patterns in rural education in Louisiana. Information for the study was obtained from pertinent federal censuses, from various Louisiana State Department of Education publications, and from questionnaire responses of high school juniors and seniors in selected sample schools. The study proceeded on the assumption that it was necessary to catalog recent demographic and other socio-cultural changes in order to plan wisely for the future of rural schools. Findings are summarized below.

Summary

Population trends are basic to studies of rural education, so the first concern of the study was to determine what changes in the number, composition and distribution of the state's population had taken place in the last quarter century. Especial emphasis was given the rural population because of the focus of the study. It was found that the state's urban population is growing at a rapid rate while its rural population is decreasing. Negroes have decreased in numbers faster than whites in rural areas within recent years.

The school-age population (7-17 years) in the state increased by almost one-half in 30 years, but virtually all this increase took place in urban areas. Rural parishes had approximately the same number of children in these ages in 1930 as in 1960.

School enrollment has increased in rural areas even though population has not. A much larger percentage of children 7-17 years of age attended school in 1960 than did in 1930. This is true of both whites and nonwhites. Urban areas also experienced an increase in enrollment.

Not only has the number of teachers in the state increased but the educational qualifications and experience of teachers have improved. Interestingly, teachers in rural areas now are generally as well qualified and experienced as teachers in urban areas. This was not true in past years.

Public schools in Louisiana are not small by comparison with urban schools in the state and national averages. The effect of consolidation is seen in the greatly decreased number of rural schools. These schools continue to lag behind urban schools in size, however.

The curriculum outlined for rural high schools in Louisiana is in keeping with high standards of education. However, no especial program is available for students in the smaller rural schools and these students

are handicapped because of limited curricula offerings in vocational and other subjects not prescribed as mandatory.

Several characteristics of rural schools were brought out in the case study of 10 schools in 2 parishes as follows: (1) Of the pupils attending rural schools, all lived in the country or in a small hamlet, but only approximately 1 out of 3 came from a farm. Of the students attending high schools in towns, only about half lived in the towns proper, while around one-third were from farms and the remainder lived in the open country but not on a farm. (2) The data collected showed that from two-thirds to four-fifths of the students attending the rural schools rode school buses, while around half of the students attending the town schools were transported to schools via public conveyances. (3) The distance students in rural schools had to travel to school varied with settlement patterns, but the majority of students lived at least 3 miles away. The majority of students attending the town schools lived less than 4 miles from their school. (4) The responses of male students in the rural schools indicated that only 1 in 20 expected to be farmers. Even fewer of the boys in the town schools aspired to this occupation. (5) Two out of 3 of the students in the rural schools expected to continue their education beyond high school. Only a slightly higher percentage of town students expressed this intention. A relatively large number of girls in rural high schools (33 per cent) planned to go to some sort of vocational school after graduation. Only 5 per cent of the boys in these schools planned such a program. (6) The evidence gathered suggests that neither the rural nor the town schools serve as strong focal points for community activities. Athletic events apparently are the strongest drawing cards for people in communities surrounding the school.

Conclusions and Implications

Findings of the study have relevance in terms of public school planning for the future. It is clear that the number of people in the state is increasing but that the rural segment of the population is not sharing in this growth. This phenomenon is not unique to Louisiana and is accounted for by technological innovations which have reduced labor needs in agriculture and related rural occupations. The implications for rural education of a static population are not too clear, but certain observations can be made.

In the first place, additional teachers and additional classrooms will not be serious problems in the foreseeable future, as will be the case in urban areas. Nor will there be an alarming deficit in the quality of instruction if one is to judge according to the trends which indicate that the training and experience of rural teachers have improved through the years and is now comparable to that of urban teachers.

Secondly, trends in enrollment indicate that school attendance is no longer the problem (legal or otherwise) in rural Louisiana that it was a few years ago. Apparently, efforts to get children in school have been successful in even the most isolated places.

In the third place, it is apparent that rural schools serve a great majority of students who will not find their life's work in agriculture, and who will not live out their lives in rural areas. The significance of this fact for high school curriculum and for the general philosophy of education in rural areas is self-evident. It represents an important and immediate challenge to curriculum planners.

Finally, there is an over-all implication that stems from the fact that both the population and the socio-cultural patterns are changing rapidly in the state. As levels of living, educational levels, communication and transportation improve, it is inevitable that attitudes and values toward education will change. Persons who share a concern over rural education must familiarize themselves with these trends if they are to plan wisely for the future.

Rural Education in Transition

A Study of Trends and Patterns in Louisiana

MARION B. SMITH AND ALVIN L. BERTRAND*

Introduction

Citizens of Louisiana have long had to face the fact that the educational status of the state's population was among the lowest in the nation. All studies of education in the state point up the fact that certain segments of the population do not have the educational advantages of other population groups. Two such disparities have stood out over the years—the difference between the rural and urban segments of the population and the difference between Negroes and whites.

This study was undertaken to bring up to date the information on the trends and patterns which relate to rural education. A study of rural education is important for several reasons, including the increasing urbanization of the state. Such information is, of course, basic to the planning for progress which is being done in the state and nation. It also serves a fundamental purpose of measuring the success of past programs of rural population at a point in time.

Timeliness of Study

Several developments convinced the writers that a study of rural education would be most timely. First, the detailed results of the Eighteenth Decennial Census have only recently become available. According to these data the rural people continue to lag significantly behind the urban people of the state in education, although both groups showed considerable improvement during the past decade. In 1960, the median number of years of schooling completed by adults (those persons 25 years and over) was 9.8 years for urban persons but only 7.5 years for rural persons.[1] This differential is such as to warrant close scrutiny.

The second development was a research grant from the Farm Population Branch of the U. S. Department of Agriculture to the Department of Rural Sociology at Louisiana State University to study dropouts in rural high schools. This grant made it possible to interview students

*Professor Emeritus and Professor, respectively, Departments of Sociology and Rural Sociology.

[1]Unless otherwise specified, data quoted throughout this report for 1960 will be from the *United States Census of Population, 1960*, PC (1) A-D, U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. Data from other censuses will be used occasionally with appropriate reference.

and teachers in selected rural high schools and thus to obtain first-hand information about rural education in the state. A previous publication from this study dealt primarly with the dropout problem.[2]

Finally, a comprehensive study of rural education in the state approximately one-quarter of a century ago provided a basis for measuring trends.[3]

Methods and Procedures

The data for this study came from several sources. Publications of the Bureau of the Census and of the Louisiana State Department of Education were used extensively. In each instance where data from these sources were utilized, an appropriate reference is made although specific citations are omitted.

Since the aim of the study was to highlight changes in rural education the data for parishes were grouped in such a way as to more clearly show trends and patterns in the rural segment of the population. In 1950, for the first time in the history of the state, the majority of Louisianians were found to be living in urban places. The writers felt this was a key year from which to measure changes. The 6 most urban parishes in 1950 (65 per cent urban or more) and the 29 most rural parishes in 1950 (75 per cent rural or more) were selected to serve as bases for comparisons. Trends in these parishes are shown in the tables which are included.

The final section of this report is an analysis of certain data obtained from the field survey made in connection with the cooperative study mentioned above. This study was done during the school year 1958-59 and included 10 schools in two parishes, one in French South Louisiana, and one in non-French (Anglo-Saxon, Scotch-Irish) North Louisiana. The high school juniors and seniors (grades 11 and 12) and the teachers and principals in the 10 sample schools were interviewed and asked to answer a list of questions. Altogether, 389 junior and senior students completed the questionnaires.[4]

Population Trends in Louisiana: 1930 - 1960

The intent of this study was to examine changes in rural education in Louisiana over the last quarter century. However, since national censuses are taken at 10-year intervals, it is necessary to show some trends over a 30-year span going back to 1930.

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[2]Alvin L. Bertrand and Marion B. Smith, *Environmental Factors and School Attendance: A Study in Rural Louisiana,* La. Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin No. 533, May, 1960.

[3]Marion B. Smith, *A Sociological Analysis of Rural Education in Louisiana,* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1938).

[4]The details of the study appear in Bertrand and Smith, *op. cit.*

TABLE 1.—Population Trends in Louisiana, 1930-1960, by Race, Residence and Most Urban and Most Rural Parishes

Population Group	1930	1940	1950	1960	Increase or Decrease 1930-1960	
					Number	Per Cent
Total Population	2,101,593	2,363,880	2,683,516	3,257,022	1,155,429	55.0
Residence						
Urban	833,532	980,439	1,471,696	2,060,606	1,227,074	147.2
Rural-Farm	826,822	850,382	567,455	233,138	-593,744	-71.8
Rural-nonfarm	441,179	533,059	644,365	963,278	522,099	118.3
Race						
Whites	1,318,160	1,511,739	1,796,683	2,211,954	893,794	67.8
Urban	574,249	665,464	1,022,931	1,415,619	841,370	146.5
Rural-Farm	451,063	469,446	332,608	141,739	-309,324	-68.6
Rural-Nonfarm	292,848	376,829	441,144	654,516	361,668	123.5
Nonwhites	783,433	852,141	886,833	1,045,068	261,635	33.4
Urban	259,283	314,975	448,765	644,907	385,624	148.7
Rural-Farm	375,819	380,936	234,847	91,399	-284,420	-75.6
Rural-Nonfarm	148,331	156,230	203,221	308,762	160,431	108.2
6 Most Urban Parishes*	787,972	899,256	1,173,449	1,537,349	749,377	95.1
Urban	631,691	708,126	1,045,421	1,388,671	756,980	119.8
Rural-Farm	67,628	62,170	35,186	10,595	-57,033	-85.1
Rural-Nonfarm	88,653	128,960	92,842	138,038	49,385	55.7
29 Most Rural Parishes*	523,115	573,131	536,066	569,113	45,998	8.8
Urban	16,040	32,102	53,906	122,756	106,716	665.3
Rural-Farm	342,038	362,466	240,586	98,583	-243,455	-71.2
Rural-Nonfarm	165,037	178,563	241,574	347,774	182,737	110.7

*Based on 17th Decennial Census

The total population of Louisiana in 1930 was 2,101,593. By 1940, the number of people in the state had increased to 2,363,880, an increase of 262,287 or 12.5 per cent. In 1950, the population had reached 2,683,-516, an increase of 319,636 or 13.5 per cent over 1940. The 1960 Louisiana population included a total of 3,257,022 persons. This number represented an increase of 1,155,429 individuals or 55.0 per cent in 30 years.

Rural Population Trends and Their Significance for Education

The population of the state in 1930 was less than 40 per cent urban, (39.7). Approximately the same number of people (39.3 per cent) was classed as rural-farm and 21.0 per cent was classified rural-nonfarm. By 1950 the rural-farm population had decreased from 1930 by 259,427 persons (31.4 per cent); the rural-nonfarm had increased by 203,186 persons. This amounted to a 46.1 per cent gain in rural-nonfarm population in 20 years. The urban population of the state rose by 638,164 individuals for an increase of 76.6 per cent. By 1960 the rural-farm population had decreased to *233,138* persons, a loss in population during the previous 30 years of 593,744 or 71.8 per cent. The rural-nonfarm population increased during this time to 522,099, a gain of 118.3 per cent, and the urban population rose to 2,060,606, an increase of 1,227,074 or 147.2 per cent.

The six most urban parishes in 1950 (those with a population 65 per cent or more urban) were Orleans, Caddo, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Calcasieu, and Ouachita. In 1930, the total population of these parishes was 787,972, which was 37.5 per cent of the total population of the state. The 1960 census showed the total population of these six parishes to be 1,537,349 or 47.2 per cent of the total state population. It is quite clear that these six parishes now represent the most urban parts of Louisiana and may be used to contrast the patterns of education found in the most rural parts of the state.

In 1950, at least 75 per cent of the population in 29 of the 64 parishes was classed as rural.[5] In 1930 the total population of these 29 parishes was 523,115. By 1950 the population of these parishes was 536,066, representing one-fourth (24.9 per cent) of the total population of the state; in 1960 it was 569,113 and was down to less than one-fifth (17.5 per cent) of the state's population.

In 1930 only 16,040 or 3.1 per cent of the population of the 29 most rural parishes was classed as urban; 31.5 per cent was classed as rural-farm and 65.4 per cent was classed as rural-nonfarm. By the time of the

[5]Ascension, Assumption, Avoyelles, Bienville, Caldwell, Cameron, Catahoula, DeSoto, Evangeline, Franklin, Grant, Iberville, Jackson, La Salle, Livingston, Plaquemines, Pointe Coupee, Red River, Richland, Sabine, St. Bernard, St. Helena, St. James, St. Martin, Tensas, Union, Vernon, West Carroll, West Feliciana.

1960 census, the urban population in these parishes had increased in number more than six fold, to 122,756 or 21.6 per cent of the total of the 29 parishes' population. The rural-farm population of these parishes, on the other hand, decreased during this 30-year period from 342,038 to 98,583, and represented less than one-fifth (17.3 per cent) of the population in 1960. The total loss in rural-farm population during the 30-year period was 243,455, or nearly three-fourths (71.2 per cent). Rural residents not on farms increased to 182,737 in 1960, a growth of 110.7 per cent.

The first significance for rural education to be found in these population trends becomes obvious at this point. Rural schools of the state are no longer primarily serving a particular occupational group, i.e., farmers. In fact, these schools now service approximately two nonfarm persons for every farm person. The implications for curricula and other school matters are inherent in the shift of the rural population from predominantly rural-farm to predominantly rural-nonfarm.

White and Nonwhite Population Trends in Rural Areas

Although this study does not focus on Negroes, it provides a comparison of the growth of the two major racial segments of the state's population. It is noteworthy that nonwhites have been concentrated in rural areas of the state in the past — 40.9 per cent of this racial group being classified as rural in 1930. Only 33.2 per cent of the nonwhites of the state lived in rural places in 1960. In 1930, 36.9 per cent of the total population of the state was nonwhite as contrasted with 31.9 per cent in 1960. During the 30-year period included in this study, the number of both racial groups increased substantially. Nonwhites enlarged their numbers from 783,433 to 1,045,068, an increase of 261,635 or 33.4 per cent. The white population increased from 1,318,160 to 2,211,954, an increase of 893,794 or 67.8 per cent.

The increase of white and Negro population in Louisiana during the 30 years was not equally distributed among all areas of the state or within all population groups. For example, whites registered an increase of 749,377 or 95.1 per cent in the six parishes which were 75 per cent or more urban in 1950. The Negro population also increased in these urban centers but at a much slower rate, adding 120,838 persons for a 33.4 per cent increase. In the 29 parishes which had 75 per cent or more of their population classed as rural, the white population increased much less rapidly — by 47,804 (a 15.1 per cent jump). The Negro population actually decreased by 5,181 persons (2.0 per cent) during this 30-year period. Both these trends have implications for rural and urban education.

School-Age Population Trends

In 1930 there were 506,356 people 7-17 years old in the state. These ages are included because they represent the ages at which children and youths are most likely to be in school. Of this number, 316,333 were white. (See Table 2.) By 1960 the number had increased some 223,552 persons to a total of 731,455, an increase of 44.1 per cent. Whites in these ages increased by 149,649 (47.3 per cent), compared with an increase of 73,903 (38.9 per cent) for Negroes.

The number of children 7-17 years old in the six most urban parishes of the state increased from 159,368 to 318,724 during the 30-year period, a jump of 159,356 or 100 per cent.

The 29 parishes with a population 75 per cent or more rural in 1950 had 140,351 people of ages 7-17 in 1930. By 1960 the school-age population had increased slightly to a total of 141,314, an increase of 963 during the 30 year period (.7 per cent).

A study of the above trend indicates clearly that rural schools have not experienced the pressure for buildings and other facilities that urban parishes have. In fact, it seems unrealistic to expect more than small increases in the school-age population in rural parishes in the foreseeable future.

Trend in School Attendance

Normally a person would find an increase or decrease in the number of children of school age to be accompanied by a comparable increase or decrease in school attendance. For the state as a whole there was a great increase in the children 7-17 years of age enrolled in school from 1930 to 1960, from 407,914 to 688,336, which amounted to 68.7 per cent.

In 1930 the total enrollment of white children 7-17 years in school was 267,343. By 1960 the enrollment had increased to a total of 442,477 an increase of 65.5 per cent during the 30 years. Nonwhite enrollment advanced from 140,571 to 245,859, a rise of 74.9 per cent. The percentage of Negro children of school age in school in 1960 was for the first time almost the same as that of whites.

The number of children 7-17 years of age in the six most urban parishes in 1930 was 159,368, of which 129,354 or 81.2 per cent were enrolled in school. During the 30-year period between 1930 and 1960 the number of children of school-age in these parishes increased by 159,356, almost 100 per cent. The percentage of school age children enrolled in school in 1960 was 94.6 per cent, a jump of 13.4 percentage points in 30 years.

In the 29 most rural parishes, there was an increase in children enrolled in school from 1930 to 1960 comparable to that registered by

TABLE 2.—Changes in the Number of Persons 7-17 Years Old in Louisiana, 1930-1960, by Race and Most Urban and Most Rural Parishes

Population Group 7-17 Years Old	1930	1940	1950	1960	Increase or Decrease 1930 - 1960	
					Number	Per Cent
Total Population	506,356	524,703	524,545	731,455	223,552	44.1
Whites	316,333	328,161	328,685	465,982	149,649	47.3
Nonwhites	190,023	196,542	195,860	263,926	73,903	38.9
6 Most Urban Parishes*	159,368	171,901	188,895	318,724	159,356	100.0
29 Most Rural Parishes*	140,351	140,254	126,215	141,314	963	.7

*Based on 17th Decennial Census

TABLE 3.—Changes in Number of Persons 7-17 Years Old Enrolled in School in Louisiana, 1930-1960, by Race and Most Urban and Most Rural Parishes

Population Group 7-17 Years of Age Enrolled in School	1930	1940	1950	1960	Increase or Decrease 1930 - 1960	
					Number	Per Cent
Total Population Enrolled	407,914	440,346	471,810	688,336	280,422	68.7
Per Cent Enrolled	80.6	83.9	89.9	94.1	.....	...
White Population Enrolled	267,343	288,195	300,315	442,477	175,134	65.5
Per Cent Enrolled	84.5	87.8	91.4	94.9	.....	...
Nonwhite Population Enrolled	140,571	152,151	171,495	245,859	105,288	74.9
Per Cent Enrolled	74.0	77.4	87.6	93.1	.....	...
Number Enrolled, 6 Most Urban Parishes*	129,354	152,421	174,165	301,364	172,010	133.0
Per Cent Enrolled	81.2	88.7	92.2	94.6	.....	...
Number Enrolled, 29 Most Rural Parishes*	111,703	116,349	112,795	133,618	21,915	19.6
Per Cent Enrolled	79.6	83.0	89.4	94.6	.....	...

*Based on 17th Decennial Census

the state as a whole. There was a relatively large increase of 21,915 children, which jumped the percentage of children 7-17 years of age in school to 94.6 per cent.

This amounted to an increase of 15 percentage points during the 30-year period. Thus it is apparent that the school age population has increased during these 30 years more rapidly in the most urban than in the most rural parishes, but the relative number of school-age children in school increased somewhat more rapidly in the rural parishes. In 1960 there was no difference between residence groups in the percentage enrolled in school.

Teachers in Louisiana Public Schools

The general increase in the number of children enrolled in Louisiana schools was paralleled by an increase in the number of teachers to conduct these schools. In 1936-37 there were 13,525 public school teachers in the state, 9,860 of whom were white.[6] (Comparisons here cover the last 24 years, 1936-37 to 1960-61, and take advantage of the study previously mentioned. The 1961-62 data were not available when this study was initiated.) By 1960-61 the number had increased to 26,371, including 17,146 white public school teachers.[7] Thus, in the 24 years the number of public school teachers increased by 12,846 or 95 per cent. White public school teachers experienced a gain of 73.9 per cent, and Negro teachers of 115.7 per cent.

In the six most urban parishes there were 3,973 teachers employed in the public schools in 1936-37, of whom 2,935 were in the white schools. By 1960-61, the total number of teachers in these schools was 10,080. White teachers then numbered 6,329, a gain of 3,394 or 115.6 per cent. Negro teachers numbered 3,751, for a gain of 2,713 or 261.4 per cent. The rate of increase of students was less than that of teachers. (See two preceding topics.)

In the 29 most rural parishes of the state there were 4,088 teachers in 1936-37, of whom 3,010 were employed to teach the white children and 1,078 to teach the Negro children. By 1960-61 the number of teachers had increased to 5,754 (a 40.8 per cent increase). White schools added 751 teachers (25 per cent) and Negro schools, 915 teachers (84.9 per cent) during the 24 years. It can be readily seen that when measured by a pupil-teacher ratio, rural schools have improved in the last quarter century.

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[6] *Eighty-Eighth Annual Report for the Session 1936-37*, State Department of Education of Louisiana Bulletin No. 367, Vol. I, 1938, Table X. (All following data for this session are from this report.)

[7] *One Hundred Twelfth Annual Report for the 1960-61 Session*, State Department of Education of Louisiana Bulletin, No. 953, 1961, Table XV. (All following data for this session are from the report.)

The study of Louisiana rural schools made in 1936-37 enabled the researcher, Smith, to state, "The academic qualifications of the Louisiana teachers are high. Teachers in the small hamlet or open-country consolidated high schools uniformly possess higher academic training than is required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of its accredited high school teachers."[8] During the quarter century since this study, the academic requirements of teachers throughout the nation have been raised until at present all states require that high school teachers must have a degree from an approved college, together with some professional training in the field of teaching. Many states require similar preparation for teaching in the elementary schools.[9] Louisiana now requires that elementary as well as secondary school teachers have completed not less than four years of training in an approved college together with a certain number of college hours of professional training in order to be fully certified. In cases where a qualified teacher cannot be found, a person who has not met the academic requirements may be employed on a temporary basis. Such teachers are given "T" certificates. Teachers who were in the school system when the standards were raised to their present level are allowed to continue to teach.

In 1936-37, 37.7 per cent of the public school teachers of the state held college degrees. Twenty-four years later, 92.4 per cent of the teachers and principals were college graduates. Only 44.4 per cent of the white teachers had a college degree in 1936-37; but 90 per cent of the white teachers and principals held degrees in 1960-61. In 1936-37, 19.7 per cent of the teachers of the public schools for Negro children had earned degrees from colleges. In 1960-61, 96.8 per cent of the Negro teachers and principals had earned degrees.

The training of the teachers in urban schools was somewhat higher than that of the rural schools throughout the period of study. In 1936-37 the percentage of teachers with degrees in the six most urban parishes of 1950 was 47.3. The percentage of white school teachers was 51.8 and the percentage of Negro school teachers was 34.7. By 1960-61, 93.6 per cent of the teachers and principals in these parishes had earned degrees, including 91.0 per cent of the white teachers and principals and 98.1 per cent of the Negro teachers and principals. In the 29 most rural parishes, where 30.5 per cent of all the teachers had degrees in 1936-37, the percentage of white teachers with degrees increased from 36.9 to 85.8 in 24 years. The percentage of Negro teachers with degrees jumped from 12.6 to 95.5 in the 29 parishes.

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[8]Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

[9]Marion B. Smith, *Survey of Social Science*, 4th edition, (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1956) p. 188.

TABLE 4.—Trend in Professional Training of Public School Teachers in Louisiana by Race and Most Urban and Most Rural Parishes, 1936-37 and 1960-61 Sessions

Residence and Race Group	1936-37 Session					1960-61 Session				
	Total Number of Teachers	Teachers With Degrees				Total Number of Teachers	Teachers With Degrees			
		Bachelor's	Master's	Ph.D or Ed. D	Total		Bachelor's	Master's	Ph.D or Ed. D	Total
Louisiana	13,525	4,531	565	0	5,096	27,726	19,564	6,030	22	25,616
Per Cent with Degrees	37.7	....	...	.....	....	92.4	.....	....	.....	.....
White	9,860	3,837	536	0	4,373	18,036	11,676	4,539	21	16,236
Per Cent with Degrees	44.4	....	...	.....	....	90.0	.....	....	.....	.....
Nonwhite	3,665	694	29	0	723	9,690	7,888	1,491	1	9,380
Per Cent with Degrees	19.7	....	...	.....	....	96.8	.....	....	.....	.....
6 Most Urban Parishes*	3,973	1,576	304	0	1,880	10,493	7,209	2,605	13	9,827
Per Cent with Degrees	47.3	....	...	.....	....	93.6	....	....	.....	.....
White	2,935	1,238	282	0	1,520	6,603	4,227	1,772	12	6,011
Per Cent with Degrees	51.8	....	...	.....	....	91.0	....	....	.....	.....
Nonwhite	1,038	338	22	0	360	3,890	2,982	833	1	3,816
Per Cent with Degrees	34.7	....	...	.....	....	98.1	....	....	.....	.....
29 Most Rural Parishes*	4,090	1,168	80	0	1,248	6,092	4,215	1,212	5	5,432
Per Cent with Degrees	30.5	....	...	.....	....	89.1	....	....	.....	.....
White	3,013	1,036	76	0	1,112	3,982	2,424	987	5	3,416
Per Cent with Degrees	36.9	....	...	.....	....	85.8	....	....	.....	.....
Nonwhite	1,077	132	4	0	136	2,110	1,791	225	0	2,016
Per Cent with Degrees	12.6	....	...	.....	....	95.5	....	....	.....	.....

*Based on 17th Decennial Census

TABLE 5.—Trend in Teaching Experience of Public School Teachers in Louisiana by Race and Most Urban and Most Rural Parishes, 1936-37 Session and 1961-62 Session

Residence and Race Group	1936-37 Session		1960-61 Session		
	Per Cent Teachers With 1 Year of Experience	Per Cent Teachers With 5 or More Years of Experience	Per Cent Teachers With 1 Year of Experience	Per Cent Teachers With 5 or More Years of Experience	Per Cent Teachers With 19 or More Years of Experience
Louisiana	11.0	66.6	5.8	77.4	31.3
White	11.3	67.1	5.8	84.3	34.9
Nonwhite	10.3	65.4	6.0	75.0	24.6
6 Most Urban Parishes*	11.1	70.7	8.9	73.7	26.8
White	11.3	69.0	8.0	73.7	28.8
Nonwhite	10.5	71.5	6.4	76.3	23.5
29 Most Rural Parishes*	11.9	64.1	3.7	83.8	33.9
White	12.2	64.9	3.4	84.4	42.7
Nonwhite	11.0	62.0	5.2	79.0	25.5

*Based on 17th Decennial Census

Another factor to be considered in evaluating the qualifications of teachers is their experience in teaching and the security of their tenure. In 1936-37, of the public school teachers of the state as a whole, 11 per cent had taught only 1 year prior to the current year and 66.6 per cent had taught for 5 or more years. (See Table 5.) The teachers in elementary schools were more experienced on the whole than the high school teachers. The median number of years of experience for elementary school teachers was 6.3, while that for the high school teachers was 2 years less.

The experience of the white teachers was not great in 1936-37. One in 10 (11.3 per cent) had taught for only 1 year; while 67.1 per cent had taught for 5 or more years. Some 10.3 per cent of the Negro teachers had just 1 year of experience, while 65.4 per cent had 5 or more years of service.

In 1960-61 the teachers and principals were more experienced than at the earlier period. Only 5.8 per cent had just 1 year of experience and 31.3 per cent — almost one-third — had 19 or more years of experience. Over three-fourths (77.4 per cent) had taught at least 5 years. At this time all teachers of the state were protected by the Tenure Law which provided that no teacher, after a 3-year probationary period, could be removed from his position except for "cause." In 1960-61, 5.8 per cent of the white teachers and principals, and 6 per cent of the Negro teachers had only 1 year of experience, but 34.9 per cent of the former and 24.6 of the latter had 19 or more years experience. (See Table 5). Relatively more white teachers (84.3 per cent) than Negro teachers (75 per cent) had taught 5 years or more.

In the six most urban parishes, in 1936-37, 11.3 per cent of the white teachers had 1 year of experience; 69 per cent had 5 or more years experience. In 1960-61, 8 per cent had 1 year of experience or less and 73.7 per cent had 5 or more years experience, and 28.8 per cent had 19 or more years of experience. Among urban Negro teachers, in 1936-37, 1 in 10 (10.5 per cent) had only 1 year of experience, but 71.5 per cent had 5 or more years of work behind them. One-quarter century later, only 6.4 per cent of the urban Negro teachers had just 1 year of experience, while 76.3 per cent had 5 or more years experience, and 23.5 per cent had been teaching at least 19 years.

Of the teachers in the 29 most rural parishes in 1936-37, 11.9 per cent had one year of experience and 64.1 per cent had 5 or more years of experience. In 1960-61, 3.7 per cent of the teachers in these parishes had just 1 year of experience and 83.8 per cent had 5 or more years of experience. White and Negro comparisons show that 12.2 per cent of the whites, as compared with 11 per cent of the Negroes, had 1 year of experience in 1936-37, and 64.9 per cent of the former, as

compared with 62 per cent of the latter, had 5 or more years experience. In 1960-61, 3.4 per cent of the whites and 5.2 per cent of the Negro teachers had just 1 year of teaching, but 84.4 per cent of the white teachers and 79.0 per cent of the Negro teachers of these parishes had as many as 5 years of service.

It may be noted that the teachers in the urban parishes were more experienced than the teachers in rural parishes when the 1936-37 survey was made. Just the reverse was true in 1960-61. However, the teachers in both urban and rural parishes had more experience in 1960-61 than at the earlier period.

Size of Louisiana Public Schools

A characteristic of rural schools throughout the United States has been that they are smaller than the schools in cities and towns.[10] The rural schools of Louisiana have been no exception. During the present century there has been a great effort made to increase the size of rural schools in the state. In 1910, there were 1,559 one-teacher schools in the state. By 1936-37, this number had been reduced to 225.[11] According to the Louisiana School Directory for the session 1960-61, there were only 13 one-teacher public schools in the entire state at that time, with an enrollment of 275 pupils. Of these, 8 were located in urban places, 6 in New Orleans and 2 in Alexandria, to serve special cases such as polio victims, crippled children, and the like. In 1959-60, the ratio of one-teacher schools to all public schools was .7 per cent in Louisiana as compared with an average of 17.2 per cent for the nation.[12]

There were, in 1960-61, 41 schools in the state with fewer than 50 students (all elementary). Twenty-one of these were white and 20 were nonwhite. It can be seen that the small school is vanishing in the state. In fact, the number of public schools operated by the state dropped from 2,349 in 1947-48 to 1,402 in 1960-61. While data for individual parishes were not available, it can be deduced from statistics on transportation that the number of rural schools has decreased rather drastically. In 1948-49, two out of every five (40.6 per cent) of the public school students were transported to the school via public vehicles. Twelve years later, 1960-61, the portion transported was up to one-half (50.9 per cent).[13]

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[10]Mary Anne Harvey, "Statistics of Rural Schools: A U. S. Summary," *Circular Number 565*, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D. C., 1959. Walter H. Gaumnitz, "Small Schools are Growing Larger," *Circular Number 601*, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D. C., 1959.

[11]Smith, *Sociological Analysis of Rural Education in Louisiana*, p. 30.

[12]*Know Your Louisiana Schools*, Louisiana State Department of Education Bulletin No. 964, 1962, p. 24.

[13]*Ibid.*

At the same time, the average size of public schools increased from 180 to 506 students. It is a fact that Louisiana public schools are no longer small since 96.1 per cent of all pupils were registered in schools enrolling 200 or more students in 1960-61.

Curriculum of Louisiana Rural Schools

Gaumnitz defines rural education as "that part of American education located in areas lying outside of the urban centers or places having 2,500 or more inhabitants." He goes on to say, "Rural education, however, has distinctive characterstics other than that relating to geographic location. It is concerned disproportionately with those phases of education that deal with the conditions, opportunities, and problems peculiar to people living upon dispersed farmsteads, or in hamlets of less than 2,500 population; the act or art of developing and cultivating through education the various physical, intellectual, aesthetic and moral faculties and the economic and social welfare of persons living in rural communities and the organized body of knowledge and theory dealing with principles and practices of learning and teaching in rural communities."[14]

If the above definition of rural education is accepted, one would expect the curricula of rural high schools to differ somewhat from those of urban high schools. In the conclusions of the study of rural schools made in Louisiana in 1936-37, however, the following statement is found: "The rural schools fail to recognize themselves as rural where their course of study is concerned. The same urban commercial, or 'cultural' subject matter found in urban high schools is characteristic of the small rural high school."[15] The same curriculum pattern seems to exist in Louisiana schools today, although students have a considerably richer program of education.[16] No formal program for adapting curricula to the local conditions or particular needs of students is in effect, although a range of "enrichment" and vocational subjects may be elected. From personal acquaintance, the writers are aware that Department of Education officials appreciate the peculiar problems of schools in certain communities and they counsel the students accordingly in each instance. In comparing rural and urban schools, the problem of the former is their generally smaller size which prevents them from offering as wide a selection of vocational and "enrichment" courses. The rural school also has the additional problem of preparing part of its student body for farm or rural occupations, and

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[14]Gaumnitz, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
[15]Smith, *A Sociological Analysis of Rural Education in Louisiana*, p. 89.
[16]*Know Your Louisiana Schools, op. cit.*, pp. 46-52.

part for urban occupations, since most rural youths now migrate to urban places.

A Case Study of Rural Schools

As was stated in the introduction, a survey was made in 1959 of a sample of rural schools in two parishes, one located in a typical non-French culture area and one in a French culture area of the state. Through the cooperation of the parish superintendents and school officials of these parishes, four open country and hamlet schools were sampled in each parish along with the major high school located in the parish seat. In this way, it was possible to compare the students attending the most rural schools with those attending the most urban schools within the same culture area. Neither of the parish seats was highly urban. Marksville, the parish seat of Avoyelles, included 4,257 people and Winnsboro, the parish seat of Franklin Parish, had 4,437 people in 1960.

Each of the schools selected for the study was visited by the authors and some graduate students of the Departments of Sociology and Rural Sociology of Louisiana State University. Members of the 11th and 12th grades of each sample school were asked to fill out a questionnaire prepared for the study. An analysis of the responses of the students to certain items on the questionnaire follows.

Residence of Students

The school children attending the sample rural schools were all rural dwellers. In Avoyelles Parish, 52 per cent of these students reported they lived in open country but not on a farm, and 37 per cent lived in population centers of less than 2,500 people and were also classed as rural dwellers. In Franklin Parish, 74 per cent of the school children from the sample rural schools lived on farms, 10 per cent lived in small population centers, and 16 per cent lived in the open country but not on farms.

Of the children attending the urban schools in the two parish seats, 48 per cent in Avoyelles Parish and 52 per cent in Franklin Parish were determined to have an urban residence, whereas 27 and 37 per cent were classed as rural-farm, respectively. Altogether about half of the children attending the schools located in these urban centers came from rural homes.

How Students Travelled to School

The consolidation of schools in Louisiana has necessitated the development of a system of public transportation for school children by means of school buses. In Avoyelles Parish, 56 per cent of the students

of the four sample rural schools reported that they reached school by bus. In Franklin Parish, 82 per cent of the students in the rural schools rode a bus. It is in keeping with the close settlement patterns in Avoyelles that one-third (32 per cent) of the junior and senior students in the sample schools walked to school each day. Only 9 per cent of the students in the Franklin Parish sample rural schools walked. The remaining students in both parishes used private means of transportation.

Of the students attending the Marksville High School, 59 per cent rode the school bus, 21 per cent walked and 20 per cent reached school by private vehicle. Some 41 per cent of the Winnsboro High School juniors and seniors rode the school bus, 43 per cent used private transportation, and 16 per cent walked to school.

Distance Students Travelled to School

In Avoyelles Parish the students attending the four rural schools lived near the schools. Almost 3 out of 10 (29 per cent) stated that they lived less than a half mile from the school, one-fifth (21 per cent) lived from one-half mile to 1 mile away, 15 per cent lived from 1 to 2 miles away, and 21 per cent lived farther than 4 miles from their schools. In the Franklin Parish rural schools, only 11 per cent of the students lived within one-half mile of the school, 11 per cent lived one-half to 1 mile away, 12 per cent lived 1 to 2 miles, 14 per cent lived 3 to 4 miles from school and 52 per cent had to travel more than 4 miles to get to school. Interestingly, 11 per cent of these juniors and seniors had to come a distance of 11 to 25 miles to reach their school each day.

The young people who attended the Marksville High School travelled a shorter average distance to reach school than the students who were in the Winnsboro High School. Almost half of the Marksville students reported that they lived within a mile of the school (45 per cent), 20 per cent lived within 2 miles, 13 per cent within 4 miles, 9 per cent within 6 miles, 10 per cent 7 to 10 miles, and only 2 per cent of the students lived more than 10 miles from the school they attended. Of the Winnsboro students, only 18 per cent lived within a mile of the school,[17] 13 per cent lived a mile to 2 miles, 17 per cent lived 3 to 4 miles, 10 per cent travelled 5 to 6 miles and 10 per cent went 7 to 10 miles to reach their school. About two-thirds of the Marksville students travelled no more than 2 miles to reach their school. If we assume that the students of Winnsoboro High who did not answer the question as to the distance travelled, were dwellers in town, slightly less than two-thirds of the students there travelled less than 2 miles.

[17]It should be noted that 33 per cent of the Winnsboro students did not state how far they lived from school. It may be assumed that they were the town students who did not live far from the school and, therefore, did not estimate the distance.

The Vocational Plans of Students

The study of rural schools in Louisiana made in 1936-37 determined that 19.6 per cent of all the elementary school pupils attending town or rural consolidated schools expected to remain in the country. Among high school students the percentage expecting to live out their life in rural areas had fallen to 10.4 per cent; and among those students who had reached the senior year of high school, only 6.0 per cent expected to remain in this kind of environment.[18] The two explanations for this phenomenon offered were that pupils who desire to remain in the country either did not continue in school; or as they climbed the educational ladder, their desire to remain in the country was changed.

The students questioned in Avoyelles and Franklin parishes likewise did not expect to be farmers. In reply to the questions, "What job do you hope to make your life's work," only 5 per cent of the boys from the rural sample schools expected to be farmers, while 6 per cent of the boys from the Marksville High School aspired to this occupation. Not a boy among the juniors and seniors questioned in the Winnsboro High School indicated that they wanted to be farmers. It is interesting to note, however, that of the boys who had dropped out of school, 19 per cent indicated that they wanted to be farmers.

Plans for Further Education

The question was asked of the student in the sample schools, "Do you plan further education or training?" In reply, 60 per cent of the boys in the rural sample schools and 73 per cent of the girls in these schools said, "Yes." Of the town students, 76 per cent of the boys from Marksville and 68 per cent of those from Winnsboro said, "Yes," while 67 per cent of the girls from Marksville, and 75 per cent of the girls from Winnsboro answered in the affirmative. These findings indicate a considerably higher percentage of the boys from the town schools planned to continue their education beyond high school than was true of the boys in rural schools, approximately 72 per cent as compared with 60 per cent. In contrast approximately the same percentage of rural and urban girls indicated plans to continue their education — 73 and 72 per cent, respectively. It may also be noted that a higher percentage of girls than of boys indicated plans to continue their education beyond high school.

The tabulations of responses to questions on what their post-high school educational plans included showed that approximately 33 per cent of the girls from rural schools wanted to study in a trade school or business college and not a liberal arts or a professional college or

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[18]Smith, *A Sociological Analysis of Rural Education in Louisiana*, pp. 68-69.

university. A smaller percentage of the town girls indicated a desire to continue their education in a trade school or business college — 26.1 per cent. Of the boys, only 8.1 per cent from rural schools and 8.5 per cent from town schools indicated a desire to continue their education in a trade school or business college. The percentage of town school girls indicating a desire to go to college was higher than that of the country school girls, 35.7 per cent compared with 26.1 per cent. The percentage of urban boys expressing plans to go to college was also higher than that of the rural boys, 55.0 per cent compared with 37.0 per cent.

The School as a Community Center

Throughout the early history of our American society the rural school played an important part in community life. There the citizens would gather for recreation, for discussion of civic problems, and for consideration of the problems associated with the operation of the school. Through the rural school the people were drawn into close interaction. There is some question today whether or not schools are continuing to serve this function. For this reason, all students were asked to indicate how often their parents attended school functions.

In the study of rural schools in Louisiana made in 1936, this conclusion was drawn: "There is very little evidence to support the idea that the rural school, as an established institution, feels any responsibility to the community in which it is located. Not a high school reported any form of community activity functioning in the school except the P. T. A."

In Avoyelles and Franklin parishes in 1959, about 25 per cent of the students in rural schools reported that their parents attended athletic activities of the school frequently, while 75 per cent said their parents only "occasionally" or "never" attended school activities. About 35 per cent of the students attending the urban schools said their parents attended these functions. It must be kept in mind of course, that the town schools included many students brought in from rural areas. Less than half of the students from rural schools said their parents attended plays, musical events and other such school activities with regularity. Only one school of the 10 studied reported having a Parent-Teacher Association.